

Testimony regarding SB 1057, HB 5004, and HB 1064 (Early Voting implementation)

Sirs/Mmes:

I am glad that the legislature is considering implementing Early Voting. However, I do have some concerns about the 3 bills that I have seen so far:

1. It is not clear to me that we need more than a week (7 days) of early voting. In fact, so long as at least 2 of those days include one Saturday and one Sunday, I believe that we could provide adequate support for voters who cannot make it to the polls on Election Day with 5 days of EV.

2. No law on EV should limit voting hours to regular office hours. However, as long as at least some EV days include early mornings and/or late evenings, we should be OK. Also, do weekend hours have to be the same as weekday hours? Also, speaking now as a registrar, I'm not sure that it makes sense for the polls to be open for a full day on each EV day. Even assuming that the state's voter registration system can be upgraded to cope with EV (which is apparently not yet a given), my staff will need several hours between each voting session to make sure that the poll checkers have an updated list of who's voted so far and who's still eligible. Electronic poll books would help in this regard, but we don't have electronic poll books yet, and even when we get them, anything that goes over the internet can be hacked, so I'd want us to have updated paper backup every day. This takes time.

3. No law should require that EV locations be accessible by public transportation. In Trumbull, bus service does (at least on a limited schedule) run close to Town Hall, which we're considering for our EV site, but I suspect that there are towns where such public transportation options don't exist.

4. None of the EV bills contemplate letting EV voters actually run their ballots through the tabulator. This means:

- a) that the rejection rate (e.g., no signature) will go up; and
- b) that the ballot handlers on Election Day will have to open a lot of ballots, so each town will need a ton of extra helpers; and, much more importantly,
- c) if the EV voters have voted for more than one candidate in each column, they WON'T BE ABLE TO CURE THEIR ERRORS, because they'll be long gone by the time the tabulators kick the overvoted ballots back out. This is manifestly unfair to EV voters as compared with Election Day voters, and to my mind could count as a denial of equal protection.

5. I am glad that the Legislature apparently intends to use state money to fund implementation of Early Voting. Does the state intend to keep using state money in future years, or will the burdens soon fall on the towns and cities, which would mean funding mainly based on property taxes?